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REPORT ON A

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STATEWIDE DIALOGUE

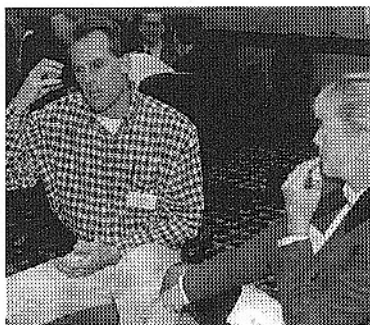
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ON SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM

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IN CALIFORNIA

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*How can we advance the ethic and practice  
of service and volunteerism  
to improve life in the State of California?*

THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION  
DECEMBER 1998

## **About The James Irvine Foundation and its Interest in Service and Volunteerism**

The James Irvine Foundation was established in 1937 to promote the general welfare of the people of California. The Foundation is dedicated to enhancing the social, economic, and physical quality of life throughout California, and to enriching the State's intellectual and cultural environment. Within these broad purposes, the Foundation supports arts, civic culture, health, higher education, sustainable communities, and youth programs.

As part of its focus on strengthening the nonprofit sector and encouraging civic engagement and responsibility, the Foundation has a long-standing interest and substantial grantmaking history in promoting community service and volunteerism.

In a collaboration with the San Francisco Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr., Fund, the United Way, and Volunteer Centers, the Irvine Foundation helped establish The Volunteerism Project in San Francisco in 1990 and The Los Angeles Volunteerism Project in 1993. The following year, after the passage of the National and Community Service Act of 1993, the Foundation established its California Initiative for National and Community Service to help build a strong community-based infrastructure that would help expand and sustain national service in California. The Foundation's work in national and community service has involved grantmaking and other activities at the local, regional, statewide, and national levels to build local program capacity, provide leadership to philanthropy, and improve infrastructure that connects and promotes high-quality programs.

### **The James Irvine Foundation**

One Market, Steuart Tower, Suite 2500

San Francisco, CA 94105

Telephone: 415-777-2244

Facsimile: 415-777-0869

Internet: [www.irvine.org](http://www.irvine.org)

## About This Report

*"The conversation has stopped. How can we get it going again?"*

*- Joanna Lennon, East Bay Conservation Corps*

"How can we advance the ethic and practice of service and volunteerism to improve life in the State of California?" This was the convening question that a group of 62 community leaders explored at a statewide dialogue organized by The James Irvine Foundation and held in San Jose on November 11 and 12, 1998. The two-day session was meant to begin a conversation that might ultimately lead to answers to the question and potential actions for implementing those answers.

A first step, the session brought together a wide range of people who represent diverse voices in California's rich array of service and volunteerism programs and initiatives. Participants came from established agencies like United Way and the Girl Scouts, and from young, grassroots organizations that included Civic Investment California and the AmeriCan Foundation for Social Change. There were weathered veterans of the service movement and recent graduates of AmeriCorps programs; organizers and administrators; people from education, foundations, government, faith-based organizations, and corporations.

The Statewide Dialogue on Service and Volunteerism in California provided an opportunity for these 62 people to speak to, and hear, one another; begin to build a sense of common purpose and community; and generate initial ideas about the leadership and actions necessary to advance service at every level and in every community throughout the state.

Despite the range of voices that were heard during the dialogue, and the many perspectives that were shared, no room is large enough to contain the vast diversity of service and volunteerism in California. This report is thus intended to extend that conversation by bringing its key moments to a larger audience.

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## A Selection of Milestones

### 1800s: Volunteer groups are primarily religious and private.

- 1878 Salvation Army founded in England.
- 1881 Clara Barton founds American Red Cross.
- 1893 Denver blizzard destruction leads to development of Community Chest.
- 1897 Forerunner of national PTA is founded in Washington, D.C.

### 1900-1950s: Increased membership in civic and voluntary organizations.

- 1901 Nineteen-year-old Mary Harriman founds the first Junior League in New York.
- 1904 Big Brothers/Big Sisters founded.
- 1905 First Rotary Club organized in Chicago.
- 1906 YWCA of the USA established.
- 1914 Kiwanis founded in Detroit.
- 1918 United Way of America establishes first national service center.
- 1930s New Deal policies engage government in social welfare.
- 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt creates Civilian Conservation Corps.

### 1960s-1970s: Civil Rights Movement and War on Poverty provide impetus for community involvement.

- 1961 President Kennedy creates Peace Corps.
- 1964 President Johnson creates VISTA and establishes government agencies to care for Americans in need.
- 1965 Grandparents Program established by federal government.
- 1971 Congress creates ACTION to coordinate Peace Corps and VISTA.
- 1971 Federal government establishes Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.
- 1975 Federal government establishes Senior Companion Program.
- 1976 Governor Jerry Brown establishes California Conservation Corps.
- 1976 Habitat for Humanity is founded.

### 1980s-1990s: Government's role in service increases and partnerships form across sectors as service and volunteerism is used to address a broad range of local and national issues.

- 1980 President Reagan calls upon the private sector to organize volunteers.
- 1980 Independent Sector founded as a national coalition of volunteer organizations.
- 1983 Carnegie Foundation issues report advocating high school students' involvement in service.
- 1984 California Senate Bill 2049 provides funding to increase the number of local conservation corps.
- 1986 California Assembly Bill 2020 provides recycling funds to local conservation corps.
- 1987 California's Human Corps legislation recommends that state college and university students complete 30 hours of service prior to graduation.
- 1988 President Bush coins phrase "a thousand points of light" and establishes program recognizing outstanding volunteers.
- 1990 Points of Light Foundation is created.
- 1990 National Community Service Act supports national service demonstration projects and service-learning programs.
- 1990 California State School Board issues resolution on the importance of service in K-12 schools.
- 1993 President Clinton signs National and Community Service Trust Act establishing the Corporation for National Service to administer AmeriCorps, the Senior Service Corps, and Learn and Serve America.
- 1994 Governor Wilson issues an executive order creating the California Commission on Improving Life Through Service. First class of AmeriCorps volunteers begins work in California communities.
- 1994 Higher education institutions required to use 5 percent of federal work-study allocation to compensate students involved in community service activities.
- 1996 State Superintendent of Public Instruction includes service-learning as a component of Challenge Schools initiative.
- 1996 Governor Wilson creates California Mentoring Initiative to recruit 250,000 mentors for 1,000,000 youth by the year 2000.
- 1997 Presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter, and Ford; General Powell; and former First Lady Nancy Reagan convene Presidents' Summit in Philadelphia as a new call to volunteers to respond to the needs of children.
- 1998 California State University Chancellor's Office creates position to promote implementation of service programs.



## The Meaning of Service and Volunteerism

*"The call of service has been heard by many of us—but with different messages, at different pitches and frequencies and with different outcomes." - Robert Coles, The Call of Service*

Since our nation's founding, people have been helping one another and their country through both informal and formal means. In the 1830s, French writer Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that he had "often seen Americans make . . . great sacrifices for the common good," and in the early 1900s, American psychologist William James called for an army of service providers to wage the "moral equivalent of war." In the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy urged the nation to "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," and Martin Luther King, Jr., called individuals to action when he proclaimed that "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve."

Today, there are a different set of phrases: *community and national service, getting things done, service-learning, service as a strategy, mentoring, a thousand points of light, faith in action, civic engagement*. Yet, although the words may be different, the underlying principle is the same—individuals contributing to the public good by making a commitment and taking action.

A snapshot of service and volunteerism in California would reveal a tapestry of old and new ideas and initiatives. Or, perhaps, no snapshot could capture the dynamic image that is constantly changing in response to social, economic and political forces which are altering the roles, responsibilities and relationships of governmental and non-governmental sectors. These forces can be described by another set of key words: *devolution, government downsizing, public/private partnerships, leveraging, communities of promise, community empowerment, neighborhood revitalization*. The result is an evolving paradigm for delivering a broad range of public services—and for increasing expectations that individuals from nonprofits, businesses, schools, and faith-based organizations will take a role in addressing persistent societal issues, ranging from youth development to welfare reform.

These changing roles and relationships should not be a surprise. The meaning of "service" has been literally evolving for centuries. The word as we now know it dates back to 16th-century England, when it was used to mean "an instance of beneficial or friendly action" and "conduct tending to the welfare or advantage of another." Even earlier, "service" was used in its religious sense: serving God by "obedience, piety and good works." And by 1700, the definition had expanded to include the idea of secular duty through public or military service. Like the service field, the word has been flexible and inclusive, finding space within itself for an ever-growing world of meanings—including even food service, transit service, and "the provision of labor and materials for the carrying out of work for which there is a constant public demand." (Definitions are from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.)



## A Few National Facts and Figures

### Volunteer Recruitment and Rates<sup>1</sup>

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1995</u>
Percentage of population volunteering	45.3	54.4	51.1	47.7	48.8
Total number of volunteers (millions)	80.0	98.4	94.2	89.2	93.0
Average weekly hours/volunteer	4.7	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2

### "Asking" is a powerful recruitment tool:

- In a national survey, people reported three major ways they had learned about their volunteer activities—by being asked by someone, through participation in an organization, or because a family member or relative would benefit. According to the survey, people who are directly asked to volunteer are three-to-four times more likely to do so than those who are not.
- Of those who were asked to volunteer:
  - 51 percent were asked by a friend,
  - 31 percent were asked by someone at church or synagogue,
  - 18 percent were asked by a relative or family member.
- Of those who learned about a volunteer opportunity through an organization, more than half discovered the opportunity through a church or synagogue, while the rest learned about it through the workplace, a school or college, or another voluntary organization. However, a recent study conducted for the Community Foundation Silicon Valley found that, unlike the national picture, the majority of people who volunteered in that area of California found out about the opportunity through their workplace.

### People volunteer in order to benefit both themselves and others:

- Almost 78 percent of people who volunteer report that volunteering is important because it "allows me to gain a new perspective on things."
- More than 80 percent of people who volunteer agree with the statement that "it is within my power to do things that improve the welfare of others." (Among non-volunteers, 58 percent of people agree with that statement.)

### A Note About Youth, Leadership and Community Service<sup>2</sup>

According to recent research, young Americans (18-30 years of age) today embrace new ways of bringing about change and approach the important idea of leadership differently than did people of previous generations. In contrast to the 1960s' belief in creating change in institutions, these young Americans report that their outlook is distinctly personal, with a heavy emphasis on direct, one-on-one service. They also believe in "bottom up," not "top down" approaches: unlike generations from the era of large government social programs, today's young adults place a premium on the efficacy of small groups of people working together to effect change in tangible ways.

<sup>1</sup> From *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, 1996. Independent Sector.

<sup>2</sup> From *New Leadership for a New Century: Key Findings from a Study on Youth, Leadership & Community Service*. August 1998. Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

## Quiet Acts in a Complex World

*"In small towns in Mexico, service is just called 'helping others.' It is a tradition, not something that is formally taught."* - Guillermo Hernandez, National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute



Service and volunteerism is a simple act of people helping one another. These acts are often uncounted, unrecorded, unnoticed—except by the people whose lives they touch. But in the United States in the twentieth century, service and volunteerism has also become increasingly organized and, as a “field,” has developed into a complex mix of sectors and roles. In California, at the community level, organizations and individuals are tapping the power of service and volunteerism to rebuild their neighborhoods and address social and environmental issues. There is growing interest in family volunteering, interfaith coalitions of religious organizations, and regional initiatives. Some traditional service and volunteer organizations are reinventing their approaches to reflect current conditions and challenges.

At the same time, more and more businesses are getting involved in their communities through volunteer efforts such as Adopt-A-School and Net Day strategies. And local mentoring programs have been connected through the California Mentoring Initiative, a public/private effort to generate more mentors for California's youth.

State trends in service are also being affected by actions at the national level—most significantly, federal 1990 and 1993 national and community service legislation, and activities following the April 1997 Presidents' Summit for America's Future. The federal legislation envisioned a new way of doing business—challenging states to organize themselves differently and programs to look at how they work with others. The Presidents' Summit resulted in 19 California cities becoming *Communities of Promise* that are committed to meeting national goals for youth and children—not only by serving youth needs through volunteer action but also by expanding opportunities for youth to serve others. (See the appendices for more information on California's sectors of service.)

### At the Dialogue: The Hard Questions

In a paper prepared for the dialogue, Dennis Collins, President of The James Irvine Foundation, posed what he called the “hard questions”—questions that are as difficult to ask as they are to answer.

- What makes up a civil society?
- How should service and volunteerism contribute to civic engagement?
- Why do people become involved?
- How do we define “community?”
- What, currently, are our communities' most critical needs?
- How can we involve more volunteers in solving these needs?
- What are the future challenges that we, as a society, are most likely to face?
- How can we work together to meet our future needs?
- How can we make diversity our most precious resource?

## The Dialogue Perspective

**"Service and volunteerism is a movement."**

- Robert Arias, Metropolitan Los Angeles, One-to-One Communities in Schools

**"Service and volunteerism is a growth industry."**

- Roger Hancock, Team America, Bank of America

### At the Dialogue: A Conversation

During a small-group discussion, the head of a small community-based organization complained to a senior corporate manager for community relations that corporations are too narrowly focused in where they give their grants. Pharmaceutical companies only give to programs that are working with health issues, he said, while utilities only give to programs doing environmental work.

"That's not going to change," the manager told him, nor is there any reason why it should. Corporations are like families, she said; they have the right to decide what work they want to support with their donations.

But, she added, corporations could be better educated about programs' budgetary needs so they would have a fuller picture of the kinds of program costs that need to be supported. She invited the group to help her provide this kind of education.

Participants at the dialogue spoke with 62 distinct voices. They represented many of the sectors involved in service and volunteerism in California—local community organizations, businesses, volunteer centers, faith-based groups, service-learning organizations, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, traditional volunteer programs, foundations, and federal, state, and local government. And they ranged widely in age and background. They brought with them a variety of perspectives about what service and volunteerism should and could achieve and how this could best be accomplished. In small-group sessions and informal conversations, they—sometimes for the first time—had the opportunity to hear and understand perspectives different from their own.

Yet despite the differences, a number of widely shared values about service and volunteerism emerged during the two days of the dialogue. These include:

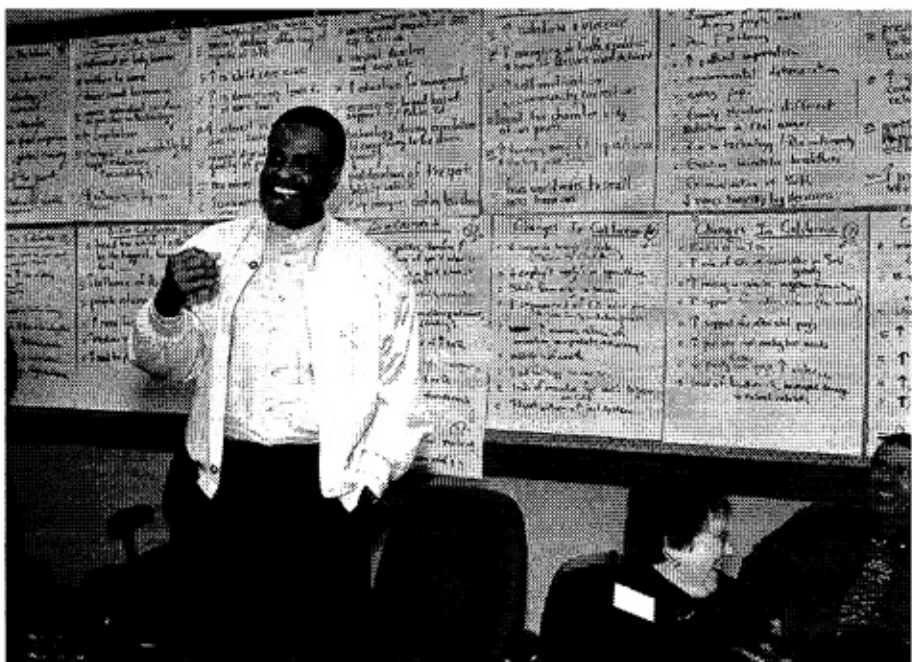
- **Service and volunteerism is a norm in American society.** Service is not a one-day media event, but an ongoing way to meet ongoing needs. It should be mainstreamed, not marginalized.
- **California faces critical issues that service and volunteerism can effectively address.** These include education, the environment, welfare-to-work, homelessness, the aging population, and children growing up without adult support.
- **Service is a partnership, an opportunity for people to take action together.** It occurs at a very local level, and requires an "organizing mentality" and a collaborative spirit, rather than a perspective that it is something being done "for" someone else.
- **The field of service and volunteerism should build on its current diversity to assure a place for everyone—including youth, the poor, and people of all cultures.** The service field can be an exemplar for demonstrating the many ways in which diversity adds value.
- **Different definitions of "service and volunteerism" exist in different cultures within American society, and all of these definitions should be recognized and embraced.** In some cultures, for example, "service" is not recognized as a separate, identifiable event but is simply called "helping."



- **Direct "service," community organizing, and advocacy are all elements of volunteerism and service.** They function together to improve communities and lives—and they should not be artificially separated.
- **Service and volunteerism requires long-term funding, and funding that is sufficient for meeting the expected results.** There tend to be "Mother Teresa" expectations of the field. Funders expect miracles—but meaningful change takes place slowly and requires professional staff support and other resources to effectively engage volunteers.

While they shared these common values, the dialogue participants had little difficulty brainstorming a list of characteristics that divide the field of service and volunteerism—and that the field should drop in order to increase its reach and effectiveness. Among the items on the list were "turf and territorialism, judgments about the best way to deliver services, the idea that cultural diversity is about skin color, artificial boundaries among streams and sectors of service, the ceiling that does not allow things to 'bubble up' from local communities, and collaboration for collaboration's sake."

The participants also brainstormed a list of what the field should be sure to keep as it moves forward. The list ranged freely among concepts and structures. It included "a sense of history, public sector involvement, a focus on the power of the individual to make change, creative collaborations that are underway at all levels, moving away from the idea of 'helping' people to the idea of partnerships, volunteer centers, diversity, and passion."



### At the Dialogue: A "Service" Story

A team of Peace Corps volunteers was working in a small village in Africa. They decided to build a well because the women, who were the water bearers, had to walk a half mile to a stream to fetch the water, and the stream was polluted—villagers got sick from drinking the water. The Peace Corps volunteers spoke to the villagers about the health risks of the stream water, and they dug a beautiful well in the middle of the village.

But there was something important they had neglected to learn about the people's lives. No one used the well. The men did not use the well because it was not their role to bring the water. The women continued to walk in groups to the polluted stream. Finally, one of the volunteers asked a woman in the village why she and the others walked so far to bring back water that was unhealthy. "We spend so much time taking care of our husbands and children," she told him, "that when we go to get the water, it's the only time we can be together as women."

*Told by Martin Jacks,  
The Mentoring Center*



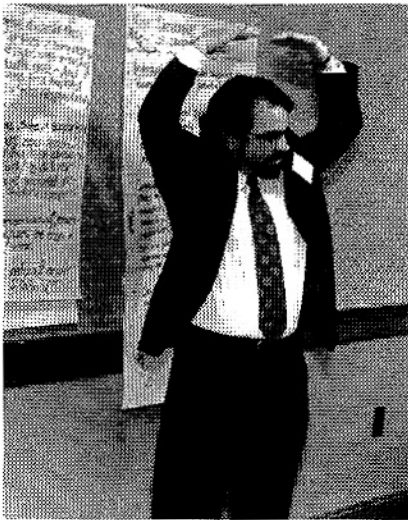
## Envisioning the Future

*"We believe that service is a powerful vehicle by which democracy is made to work for all. California can only be as great as the involvement of its people. Embracing and harnessing our rich diversity and traditions, California will achieve its fullest potential by involving people to provide service which assures that all of its residents have equal access to the following: a quality education, safe communities, a healthy environment, adequate health care, a living wage, and opportunities for civic engagement and participation."*

- Statement prepared by a group of dialogue participants

California has always been a national leader in service and volunteerism—through, for example, its support for youth service and conservation corps, service-learning, and most recently, the statewide mentoring initiative. With a new administration in Sacramento, the time seems especially auspicious for the state to again step forward and lead the nation in advancing the ethic and practice of service and volunteerism.

The dialogue was not intended to result in a specific plan of action for accomplishing this. Instead, it generated central themes and ideas to explore for potential future actions. These themes and ideas are outlined here.



**A STRONGER FUTURE FOR CALIFORNIA:** Service and volunteerism can and should be an integral part of a stronger, better California that works for all of its people. Service should be the norm for all Californians.

Service and volunteerism represents:

- A traditional American value and a fundamental component of the ideal of democracy.
- A vehicle for civic engagement, community building, empowerment, and social justice.
- A strategy for helping to solve critical problems in the state, including public education, community safety, environmental restoration, and economic development.

**A UNIFYING FORCE:** Service and volunteerism must value and utilize the strengths of California's diverse communities and cultures. It can be a force that unites and engages all of the state's people in working towards a better future.

The service and volunteerism field should:

- Be a leader in creating the social norm that diversity adds value.
- Nurture leaders of all ages and from all cultures. Embrace the many forms of leadership.
- Recognize that there are many forms of service and volunteerism that are not seen as part of "the field"—and then expand its definition of what "the field" includes.

**LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION FROM THE FIELD:** The field of service and volunteerism can take a leadership role in addressing the critical issues facing California. It should build on its current strengths and successes to extend its reach and expand its effectiveness.

The service and volunteerism field should:

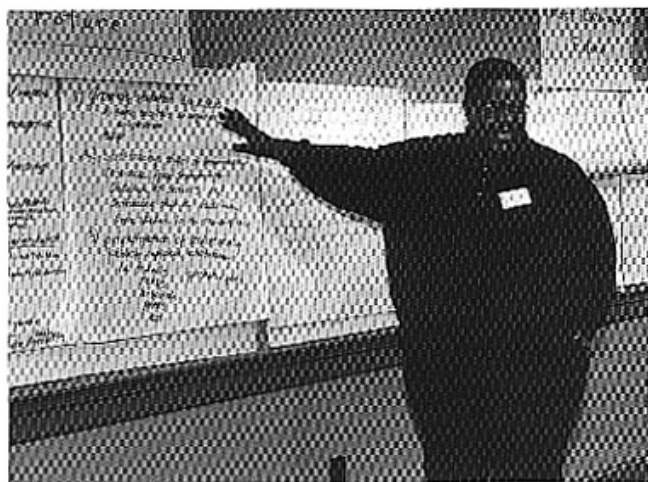
- Develop resources for identifying and disseminating “best practices,” and build on those practices by being willing to innovate, test, and fail—and learn.
- Have an “organizing mentality,” where it works in partnership with the people and communities it is “serving.”
- Encourage collaborative programming that meets real community needs and leads to meaningful changes.
- Find ways to link corporate volunteerism to the larger service “movement.”
- Value and support the role of youth as contributors and innovators.
- Explore the idea of developing a service and volunteerism interest group that could, for example, create a clearinghouse, tap into resources, and influence policy.



**A DYNAMIC STATE ROLE:** Statewide leadership, infrastructure, and support are essential for complementing and enhancing local action and creativity in service and volunteerism.

The state can:

- Recognize the economic and social impact of service and volunteerism—and the educational impact of service learning—and create new, more effective ways of allocating resources for this work.
- Provide leadership by shaping public policy that adopts service as an ongoing strategy for improving life for all of California’s residents. The state might, for example, incorporate “service as a strategy” into the legislative and budgeting processes, and create incentives (including money) for nonprofits, schools, and the private sector to incorporate service and civic participation into their plans and programs.
- Be committed to bringing local perspectives into all conversations regarding the development of a statewide vision, policies, and goals for service and volunteerism.
- Explore the idea of creating a state office of service and volunteerism that supports and builds the local capacity for action. The office could, for example, help develop a statewide infrastructure (without increasing bureaucracy) that is unified, representative, and truly non-partisan. It could also help strengthen regional collaboratives that bring together the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to provide access to resources and to coordinate efforts in support of service.



**MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS:** Communities, the service and volunteerism field, private foundations, and all levels of government should work together to develop an infrastructure and build practices that will support and enhance the power of service.

Through these efforts:

- Service and volunteerism can be supported by leadership at all levels including individuals of all ages and backgrounds, and representatives of corporations, religious institutions, education, philanthropy, government, and communities throughout the state.
- Every California community can have a web of supportive connections between and among families, schools, neighborhoods, churches and synagogues, civic and community organizations, public agencies, and local businesses that share a non-partisan ethic of service and volunteerism.
- Funders can develop practices that support the work of service and volunteerism. These practices might include, for example, regional pools of funding for service, incentives for other grantees to incorporate service and volunteerism into their programs and initiatives, more meaningful ways to evaluate the impact of service, and one reporting system among all funders so programs do not have to spend scarce resources on redundant administrative tasks.

**COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY:** The field of service and volunteerism should develop strategies for communicating its stories and its value to a wide range of audiences. These include policymakers, funders, businesses, schools and colleges, and youth, seniors, and potential volunteers and supporters across the state.

The field of service and volunteerism should:

- Work together to create a mandate for service and a recognition that service and volunteerism is a norm that can be integrated into the life of every Californian.
- Develop a central "rallying cry"—a bold, mass marketing campaign that celebrates the diversity of service and volunteerism, awakens people to its untapped potential, and motivates them to become involved.
- Tell the many stories of service and volunteerism so that government, foundations, and corporations recognize that support for service is in their own best interests.

## Moving Forward: The Dialogue Continues

*"There is no stronger power base—than people."*

*-Robert Rubin, Greater Bethany Economic Development Corporation*

After the November session in San Jose, the 62 participants were eager to begin to explore ways to put the ideas into action. Mindful of the hard work ahead, they were also energized by their shared level of commitment and optimistic about the potential of new state leadership. Recognizing their many differences, the inefficiencies in the current systems of service and volunteerism, and the untapped potential of the field, they wanted to seize the opportunity afforded by the dialogue and by new state leadership.

Thus, many of the dialogue participants met again—some on December 8th in Los Angeles, and others on December 15th in San Francisco. Their focus was on developing: 1) a set of concepts and principles of service and volunteerism that would be shared with new state leadership, and 2) options and next steps for broadening the dialogue and organizing for action. A three-pronged strategy emerged:

1. **Develop a core message from the dialogue and deliver it to new state leadership and throughout the state:** Refine ideas generated by participants and develop a plan for getting them to key leadership (including the governor, legislators, and state agency heads). Develop a core message that can be endorsed and transmitted in different ways to different audiences—and that conveys the broad diversity of stories that reflect service and volunteerism.
2. **Broaden the dialogue:** Take the key themes that were generated by the dialogue and begin to get them out—further developing them and increasing the base of people and organizations that are engaged. Use a variety of networks and mechanisms to accomplish this. Begin by building on the connections of people who attended the dialogue and then spiral outward—with a goal of involving the entire range of people and organizations, across all boundaries, by the time of the statewide service and volunteerism conference in the year 2000.
3. **Focus the next steps of the dialogue on key issues of concern:** Dialogue participants have thus far identified two key priorities—policy and marketing. First, in early 1999, it's important to develop specific policy recommendations for the state, building on the broad ideas generated during the dialogue. The second major task is to begin to explore what it would take to put together a mass marketing effort for service and volunteerism.

As these steps move the dialogue forward, they will call together increasing numbers of people across all sectors—civic, nonprofit, and grassroots organizations, faith-based institutions, business, education, government, and philanthropy—to recognize and advance service and volunteerism as a powerful vehicle to improve life in California.

"How can the service and volunteerism movement influence itself to move beyond surface level needs and symptoms to contribute to problem solving and resolution of deeper institutional and systemic issues that address root causes?"

*—Tony Massengale,  
Civic Investment California*

"We have a moment in time. We want to come up with something that is clear and understandable and truly represents the diversity of the field. Then we need to decide how to get this message out, and get the people to the table."

*—Karen Delaney, The  
Volunteer Center of Santa  
Cruz County*

## List of Participants

Miguel Andrade Jr.  
San Mateo County Barrios Unidos

Marcia Argyris  
McKesson Foundation

Robert Arias  
Communities in Schools

Cindy Beyl  
Ingram Micro

Cathrin Boaz  
Department of Alcohol & Drug Programs

Nick Bollman  
The James Irvine Foundation

Nelda Brown  
Service Learning 2000

Wade Brynson  
California Department of Education

Tina Cheplik  
Youth Service California

Todd Clark  
Constitutional Rights Foundation

Ed Connolly  
California Community Colleges

Luis Curiel  
LA Unified School District

Karen Delaney  
The Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County

Martha Diepenbrock  
The James Irvine Foundation

Bob Eichinger  
Jesuit Volunteer Corps

Kaira Esgate  
California Commission on  
Improving Life Through Service

Larry Ferlazzo  
Sacramento Valley Organizing Community

Linda Forsyth  
Commission on Improving Life Through Service

Oscar Gonzales Jr.  
Office of Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa

Roger Hancock  
Bank of America

Paul Harder  
Harder & Company Community Research

Guillermo Hernandez  
The National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute

Peter Hero  
Community Foundation Silicon Valley

Donald Hill  
Service Learning 2000  
Stanford University

Shawna Holmes  
Compaq Computer Corporation

Sophie Horiuchi  
City of Sunnyvale

Jennifer Hughes  
Volunteer Center/United Way of San Diego

Martin Jacks  
The Mentoring Center

Bob Johnson  
LA Works

Linda Jucovy  
Writer

Siobhan Kenney  
Apple Computer, Inc.

James Kooler  
Department of Alcohol & Drug Programs



Javier LaFianza  
Corporation for National Service

Ky Lam  
The James Irvine Foundation

Joanna Lennon  
East Bay Conservation Corps

Joel Mackey  
East Bay Habitat for Humanity

Kenneth Martinet  
Catholic Big Brothers

Graciela Martinez  
American Friends Service Committee

Tony Massengale  
Civic Investment California

Craig McGarvey  
The James Irvine Foundation

Patrick Moore  
Youth CAN Member

David Muraki  
California Commission on  
Improving Life Through Service

Elson Nash  
California Campus Compact

Florence Newsom  
Girl Scout Council

Kaz Oshiki  
Central City Lutheran Mission

Nancy Peterson  
The James Irvine Foundation

Carol Rauscher  
United Way of Fresno County

Alex Reid  
Humboldt Area Foundation

Robert Rubin  
Greater Bethany Economic Development Corporation

Rudy Salinas  
The American Red Cross

Aqeela Sherrills  
Amer.I.Can Foundation for Social Change

Nora Silver  
The Volunteerism Project

Noelle Simmons  
Harder & Company Community Research

Megan Swezey Fogarty  
Mid-Peninsula YWCA

Tony Thurmond-Krajewski  
San Francisco's Promise

Andrea Turner  
Department on Aging - City of Oakland

Cindy Urquidez  
Youth Service California

Dawn Valadez  
Bay Area Youth Agency Collaborative

Karen Wagener  
City of Los Angeles

Marty Weinstein  
Bay Area Community Resources

John Williams  
California Community Foundation

Debra Wogen  
Rim of World Unified School District

# Service and Volunteerism in California:

SECTOR	ELEMENTS
<b>CIVIC, NONPROFIT, AND GRASSROOTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonprofit organizations structured in different ways to deliver service through volunteerism: large national organizations; local or regional entities—some connected to, and others independent of, national nonprofits; and local grassroots organizations.</li> <li>• Local clearinghouses, referral organizations, and volunteer centers.</li> <li>• Wide variety of service clubs, and ethnic, civic, advocacy, and fraternal organizations that have service as part of their missions.</li> <li>• Other grassroots initiatives and informal structures that vary—based on issue, locale, constituency, and other factors.</li> </ul>
<b>FAITH-BASED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual religious institutions or faith-based nonprofits organized to address the needs of their surrounding communities—sometimes in partnership with other nonprofits or government.</li> <li>• Collaborations of religious institutions within a community.</li> <li>• Regional initiatives, and state-level coordination and advocacy groups.</li> </ul>
<b>BUSINESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteerism as a component of community affairs, government relations, marketing, human resources, or public relations departments.</li> <li>• Structures and incentives for employee volunteering.</li> <li>• Corporate sponsorship of local service and volunteer activities.</li> <li>• Corporate volunteer councils.</li> </ul>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<p><b>K-12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Department of Education's CalServe initiative helps school districts achieve statewide service-learning goals and administers federal Learn and Serve America funds.</li> <li>• Local school district service-learning programs and/or requirements for community service.</li> <li>• Local school district linkages with adult service clubs, volunteer centers, community agencies, and higher education and national service programs.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>HIGHER EDUCATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus-based community service and volunteer organizations and centers.</li> <li>• Linkages with "work study" and other incentives, such as America Reads.</li> <li>• Faculty symposia, K-12 teacher training, and curriculum development.</li> <li>• Institutional and systemwide support for service-learning.</li> <li>• Statewide linkage of campus programs by California Campus Compact.</li> </ul>
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<p><b>LOCAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local coordination and funding for service and volunteer activities.</li> <li>• City and county volunteer offices and managers.</li> <li>• Participation in regional service efforts, such as Communities of Promise, that are committed to achieving America's Promise national goals.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>STATE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Commission on Improving Life Through Service administers AmeriCorps funds, coordinates America's Promise activities, and works to weave "service as a strategy" into public initiatives.</li> <li>• California Conservation Corps operates a full-time youth development/environmental service program.</li> <li>• California Mentoring Initiative supports existing mentoring programs, works to start new ones, and forms regional and statewide coalitions.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>FEDERAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporation for National Service (CNS) administers AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, National Senior Service Corps, and the National Civilian Community Corps. In California, the CNS State Office oversees VISTA and Senior Service Corps (RSVP, Foster Grandparents, and Senior Companion Program).</li> <li>• Points of Light Foundation—a federally-supported nonprofit that encourages volunteerism and supports volunteer centers.</li> <li>• Volunteer coordinators and programs within federal agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>PHILANTHROPY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private and community foundations.</li> <li>• Corporate foundations and donors.</li> <li>• Groups of foundations that have organized to advance service, such as the Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service and the Northern California Grantmakers National Service Task Force.</li> </ul>

# Current Sectors and Roles

TRENDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American tradition of volunteer-organized and operated activities to address community needs—with different focus areas such as youth, health, emergency response, and social change.</li> <li>Longstanding organizations now broadening their roles to fill gaps left by changes in government's role, and partnering with other sectors to access funds and deliver services.</li> <li>New forms of mutual assistance and self-help focused on neighborhood revitalization.</li> <li>Increase in "episodic" volunteer efforts.</li> <li>Emergence of statewide nonprofits to advance service and volunteerism.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long history of organizing volunteer activities for both charitable and social justice causes.</li> <li>Currently, a more activist role in solving community problems—both because it is part of their ministry and because of concern about diminishing government support.</li> <li>Welfare reform legislation allows for increased involvement of, and government support for, faith-based social services.</li> <li>Increasing interest on the part of philanthropy in investing in faith-based initiatives.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing interest in volunteerism as a means to demonstrate community responsibility, enhance employee development, support marketing, and reflect business goals.</li> <li>In-kind contributions, such as computers, increasingly include training and support.</li> <li>Increasing number of linkages with schools and community-based organizations.</li> <li>Contracts with volunteer centers or other outside providers to help design and implement community service.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of volunteerism and service to improve student performance through in-school and after-school programs.</li> <li>Increased interest in using service as an integral component of the academic curriculum.</li> <li>Service-learning connected to, and supported by, a wide variety of state and federal programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive partnerships between campuses and local communities.</li> <li>Development of service as core to the mission of undergraduate education.</li> <li>Growing practice of using service for learning and work experience.</li> <li>More faculty and students performing service by doing community-based research.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in local government-sponsored volunteer programs.</li> <li>More volunteers delivering services that were traditionally publicly funded, such as work in libraries and parks.</li> <li>Courts' increasing use of service as alternative sentencing for adults.</li> <li>Partnerships with philanthropy, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to promote service and volunteerism.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longstanding commitment to youth service and conservation corps.</li> <li>Increased responsibility for advancing service in the 1990s as national legislation established a new role for states in administering federal funds.</li> <li>Greater emphasis on the role of volunteers to help address critical social issues facing the state and to fill gaps in public resources.</li> <li>Justice system's increasing use of community service for youth offenders.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longstanding commitment to programs such as VISTA and Senior Corps that were established in the 1960s and are operated directly by the federal government.</li> <li>New and expanded role in the 1990s, with an emphasis on leveraging funds with local resources and implementing programs in conjunction with states, educational institutions, and local and national nonprofits.</li> <li>Increasing interest in volunteer programs and "friends" organizations—such as U.S. Forest Service campground hosts—to support goals of federal agencies.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service and volunteerism a longstanding interest, and fundamental underpinning, of philanthropy.</li> <li>Increased foundation support as a result of national service.</li> <li>Increasing number of partnerships between private foundations and business or government.</li> <li>Foundations taking a more active, hands-on role, including encouraging more collaborations.</li> <li>Corporate grants and donations increasingly linked to organizations where employees volunteer.</li> </ul>

## Volunteering Through Civic, Nonprofit, and Grassroots Organizations

California's rich service fabric engages people of all ages and incomes in volunteering through neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, athletic programs, museums, fraternal organizations, ethnic groups, and many other civic, nonprofit, and grassroots organizations. These volunteer efforts range from the simple act of a neighbor to initiatives organized by statewide associations with thousands of members. Volunteers provide time and professional expertise in administrative roles with nonprofit programs. They provide policy support as members of citizen task forces, elected bodies, and nonprofit boards. Some volunteer programs are run by professional staff and others by volunteers themselves. Organizations have differing levels of sophistication of recruitment and training mechanisms depending on their size, the ratio of volunteers to staff, and whether the organization is independent or a local affiliate of a national organization.

Although some volunteer programs have been responding to community needs for over a century, others have emerged in recent years to mobilize for an issue such as AIDS, or to take advantage of demographic trends. A growing number of organizations such as Christmas in April, Habitat for Humanity, and LA Works structure their efforts to involve large volunteer groups on a more episodic basis. Volunteer Centers have been at the forefront of new efforts directed at family volunteering. Civic Ventures and other organizations are focused on tapping the commitment, talent, and professional experience of the aging baby boomer generation. A number of California's community foundations are supporting youth development and neighborhood revitalization initiatives with service as a key component. Finally, initiatives sponsored by nonprofits such as America's Promise and Joint Ventures Silicon Valley are building new regional collaborations among nonprofits, philanthropy, and business to advance volunteerism as one strategy for achieving community goals.

Statewide support organizations include: *California Association of Non-Profits*—statewide nonprofit support organization; *Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)*—Senior Corps program that matches older adults with service opportunities; *California Mentoring Initiative*—coordinated by State Office of Substance Abuse Prevention, it works with approximately 140 organizations to provide mentors to youth; *Directors of Volunteers in Agencies*—network of volunteer directors and managers; *Kiwanis California, Nevada, Hawaii Foundation*—regional support for Kiwanis clubs; *Management of Volunteers in Government*—Northern California association of volunteer coordinators working within municipal government; *Volunteer Centers of California, Incorporated*—39 independent nonprofits support and facilitate local volunteerism; *The Mentoring Center*—a mentoring support network.

### Examples of Size and Scope

- In 1998, Christmas in April in California involved 24,935 volunteers in rehabilitating 426 houses and nonprofit facilities in 72 communities.
- In 1997, Habitat for Humanity built or rehabilitated 100 homes in California, involving 150-200 volunteers at each site.
- In 1997, the California Coastal Commission Coastal Clean-up Day involved 50,000 volunteers who collected 700,000 pounds of trash.
- California's 39 Volunteer Centers annually link 250,000 volunteers with opportunities to serve in 40,000 local agencies and government offices.
- Kiwanis International has 18,364 members in California.
- Statewide, approximately 40,000 volunteers are involved in the Girl Scouts, assisting in the development of over 150,000 young girls who also participate in community service.
- The American Heart Association has over 39,000 volunteers in Santa Clara County alone.



## Faith-Based Service

California's volunteer efforts in the faith community can be organized into three large categories: services that support a religious organization's operations; projects to serve or advocate for a local, national, or international need; and informal networking through which members recruit others to join their outside volunteer commitments. These efforts are as diverse as their sponsoring institutions, but the volunteers have a common characteristic: service is a key component of their spiritual development. They are mobilized and sustained by their faith as they connect spiritual traditions to acts of philanthropy.

National surveys show a strong relationship between levels of involvement in religious organizations and levels of giving and volunteering. For years, synagogues, churches, meeting houses, and fellowship halls have combined their extensive resources, diverse membership, and doctrinal commitment to address community problems, advocate for change, and provide a social safety net for the most needy. They are often the focal point for community involvement, especially for older volunteers. California's faith-based volunteers played a lead role in the Civil Rights, Peace, Farmworkers, and Sanctuary Movements. Many have long histories of involving members in coordinating food closets and emergency services, child care facilities, schools, refugee services, racial justice campaigns, and job placement efforts. A number of secular nonprofit agencies, such as food distribution organizations, were started by faith communities and are still driven by faith-based volunteers.

Contemporary religious organizations are developing new ways to combine the work of traditional religion with efforts to pursue social justice. One strategy is the collaboration of religious communities across regions to address a particular need. For example, Urban Ministry's Hotel DeZink program in Palo Alto, through which each participating congregation hosts the homeless for one month, was founded by congregations to provide consistent shelter for the community's homeless. Similarly, the Pomona City Council of Churches supports a housing and community garden project for Southeast Asian immigrants. On both the local and state levels, faith-based nonprofits and government agencies are forging new relationships focused on youth development, welfare reform, and child care initiatives; and private foundations are investing in these efforts. Faith-based volunteer programs are evolving to adapt to the competing challenges of reduced government funding, expanding social needs, and changing demographics that result in people having limited free time and, thus, a preference for short-term service.

Statewide support organizations include: *California Council of Churches; California Interfaith Coalition; California Catholic Conference; Catholic Charities of California; Friends Committee on Legislation; Jewish Public Affairs Conference of California; Lutheran Office of Public Policy; Unitarian Universalist Service Committee;* regional non-profit ministerial organizations with local congregations as members.

### Examples of Size and Scope

- Nationwide, 31 percent of volunteers report they were personally asked to volunteer by someone in their church or synagogue, and 60 percent report that they learned about their volunteer opportunity through involvement in their church or synagogue.
- There are approximately 25,000 congregations of all religious faiths registered with the California Secretary of State. The average congregation includes 160 people.
- Nationwide, 92 percent of all congregations (236,000) report one or more programs in human services and welfare.
- California's faith communities provide one-third of the state's child care.



## Volunteering Through Business

While private business leaders have long supported civic organizations and cooperative fundraising groups such as United Way, businesses today are also encouraging employees' active involvement in local volunteer efforts. Some companies issue policies that free-up employees to volunteer a certain number of hours; others leave the policies open for individual employees to work out with their managers.

Business leaders are motivated by a sense of community responsibility, employee development goals, marketing opportunities, and company interests. A major volunteer effort of Autodesk, for example, focuses on encouraging girls to achieve in math, science, and technology, while a number of businesses endeavor to improve schools in order to have a better future work force. Their efforts include adopting a neighborhood school or youth sports team; encouraging employees to serve on nonprofit boards; providing release time for employees to participate in community or school projects; matching employee donations of time or money; making in-kind contributions of equipment, services, and professional development; and supporting employee involvement in food drives and episodic events organized by such nonprofits as Habitat for Humanity.

Corporate service efforts are most often part of the company's corporate affairs, human relations, public relations and marketing, or government relations functions. Coordination ranges from informal (run by individual employees who are passionate about an issue) to highly formalized, professional staff who make community connections and promote service opportunities through on-line listings or newsletters.

A number of companies have developed contracts with Volunteer Centers or relationships with other outside providers, such as Community Impact and Impact Online, to design and implement community service activities. Many team their employees with employees from other companies for regional service projects—20 Silicon Valley companies, for example, banded together for the Fifth Annual Corporate Volunteer Commitment and provided money, volunteers, and supplies to renovate a San Jose State fraternity building for re-use as transitional housing. In addition, a significant number of California corporations are working to provide fundamental resources to children after signing up as Corporate Commitment Makers with America's Promise Alliance for Youth, a national campaign.

Statewide support organizations include: *Corporate Volunteer Councils*—volunteer centers that provide varied levels of support to private industry volunteerism; *Corporate Volunteer Network*—a consortium of Silicon Valley corporate volunteer program managers that meets regularly to network, listen to speakers on topics of interest, and produce collaborative volunteer events; *Entrepreneurs Foundation in Menlo Park*—an organization working to involve start-up companies in philanthropy, including service and volunteerism.

### Examples of Size and Scope

- In 1996, over 100,000 volunteers—with leadership from Sun Microsystems, 3Com, Pacific Bell, and other companies—wired 4,000 California schools for Internet access.
- Nineteen California communities have designated themselves as Communities of Promise. Many include corporate Commitment Makers.

## Learning and Serving

Today in California, most public and private K-12 schools and higher education institutions involve students in some form of volunteerism as a strategy for achieving an essential function of American education: preparation for full participation in a democratic society. In addition, many schools integrate service with the curriculum, an approach called service-learning that has enjoyed federal support during the 1990s through the Corporation for National Service (CNS) Learn and Serve America program. Recent national research and a study of California schools and communities have both confirmed that service-learning is an effective strategy for K-12 teaching and learning—it effects real change in young people, schools, and communities.

Public and private K-12 schools involve students in service through school clubs, elective courses, graduation requirements, interdisciplinary units, field assignments, internships, and more. Most programs include formal or informal collaborations with civic groups, community-based organizations, colleges and universities, and/or government agencies. Public school efforts have been bolstered by federal CNS funds distributed through the California Department of Education (CDE). CDE promotes systemic implementation of service-learning and has a statewide goal that by the year 2004, 50 percent of all public school districts will include service-learning as part of their regular instructional practice.

California's colleges and universities also have a rich tradition of service rooted in institutional missions, land grants, religious affiliation, student activism, and partnerships with civic organizations and K-12 schools. Programs with significant faculty and administration support have flourished at Stanford University, University of San Diego, Cal State Monterey Bay, and Glendale Community College, among others. The California State University Chancellor's Office promotes system-wide planning for service at all 27 campuses. California's Community College system has also made strides in promoting service through budget allocations out of its Chancellor's Office, a system-wide conference, and sponsorship of the CalWork's AmeriCorps program, which involves welfare recipients in early childhood education and service on 36 campuses.

Statewide support organizations include: *California Campus Compact*—the association of college and university chancellors and presidents committed to expanding student involvement in service; *Youth Service California*—organization that promotes youth service and serves as the lead agency for a statewide conference; *CDE-CalServe*—office that makes grants to service-learning collaborations led by K-12 school districts; *Service Learning 2000 Center, Stanford University*—professional development organization that provides workshops, resource materials, and research to K-12 schools; *Western Region Serve America Clearinghouse*—organization that provides regional information and technical assistance services; *Regional Networks*—state agencies and Youth Service California that support information exchange and training among local programs that involve people in service.

### Examples of Size and Scope

- Among California's 994 public school districts, 56 are working to implement district-wide service-learning initiatives; 72 include service as a graduation requirement; 168 have received CDE-CalServe funding to support service-learning; and 361 report some kind of service program. In 1998 alone, CDE distributed \$2.5 million in grants to 47 K-12 service-learning programs that involve 137,000 students.
- At the post-secondary level, 49 higher education presidents and chancellors are members of California Campus Compact. Stanford University alone has 60 courses that include service-learning. In 1998, the federal Corporation for National Service distributed \$1 million to seven California higher education service-learning efforts with 20 sub-grantees that involve 24,372 participants.

## Serving With a Corps

Corps are not a service sector, but an approach that extends across sectors—and California has been in the forefront of the corps movement for three decades. In the 1970s, the state created the California Conservation Corps, a state version of the Civilian Conservation Corps; and during the 1980s, this idea was translated to the local level through the establishment of urban conservation and service corps.

During the 1990s, government and private organizations have expanded options for adults to make a one-to-two year service commitment in exchange for modest compensation—reflecting the nation's growing belief in the importance of taking time to make a significant commitment to a community. Most of these programs, like AmeriCorps, primarily recruit young adults, although the National Senior Service Corps is a federal national service program focused specifically on placing older Americans in community organizations. In addition, as baby boomers age, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Peace Corps, and Experience Corps are among the programs expanding efforts to recruit older Americans.

The primary focus of most service corps is full- and part-time service as a strategy to fill gaps in public resources and address social and environmental problems. In California, programs have made innovative links between service and recycling, historic preservation, education reform, criminal justice, disaster preparedness, welfare reform, and other issues. Local agencies serve as project sponsors and leverage state and federal funds to raise matching money. Most programs involve community-based collaborations and/or agreements between sponsoring nonprofits and government agencies.

Statewide support organizations include: *California Conservation Corps*—state agency operates a full-time service program through 17 service districts statewide; *California Association of Local Conservation Corps*—network of 10 independent, nonprofit service corps; *California Commission on Improving Life Through Service*—the lead agency for administering AmeriCorps funds in California; worked closely with the Department of Education and the Corporation for National Service to develop a Unified State Plan for service; *California Office of the Corporation for National Service*—state office of federal agency oversees California's VISTA and National Senior Service Corps programs.

### Examples of Size and Scope

FY1998-99 Programs	Number of Projects	Number of Members
AmeriCorps <sup>1</sup>	37	3,170
AmeriCorps America Reads	19	1,579
AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps	1	300
AmeriCorps Tribes	1	30
AmeriCorps VISTA	42	260
California Conservation Corps	17 districts	2,550
Local Conservation Corps	10 agencies	1,200 <sup>2</sup>
Foster Grandparents Program	14	1,515
Senior Companion Program	11	956
Jesuit Volunteer Corps	15 sites	93

<sup>1</sup>An additional 50 national direct AmeriCorps programs also have active projects in California.

<sup>2</sup>Enrollment figures are for 1995-96.

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Finally—and, perhaps, most importantly—we want to thank the thousands upon thousands of Californians who practice the ethic of service and volunteerism on a day-to-day basis. This report is dedicated to them.

*Nick Bollman*  
*Sr. Program Director*  
*The James Irvine Foundation*

*Martha Diepenbrock*  
*Consultant*  
*Statewide Dialogue*  
*on Service and Volunteerism*

*Nancy Peterson*  
*Consultant*  
*Statewide Dialogue*  
*on Service and Volunteerism*

## Credits

Writing: Linda Jucovy, with contributions from Nancy Peterson, Martha Diepenbrock, and Megan Swezey Fogarty

Design and Production: Hilary Andersen Design

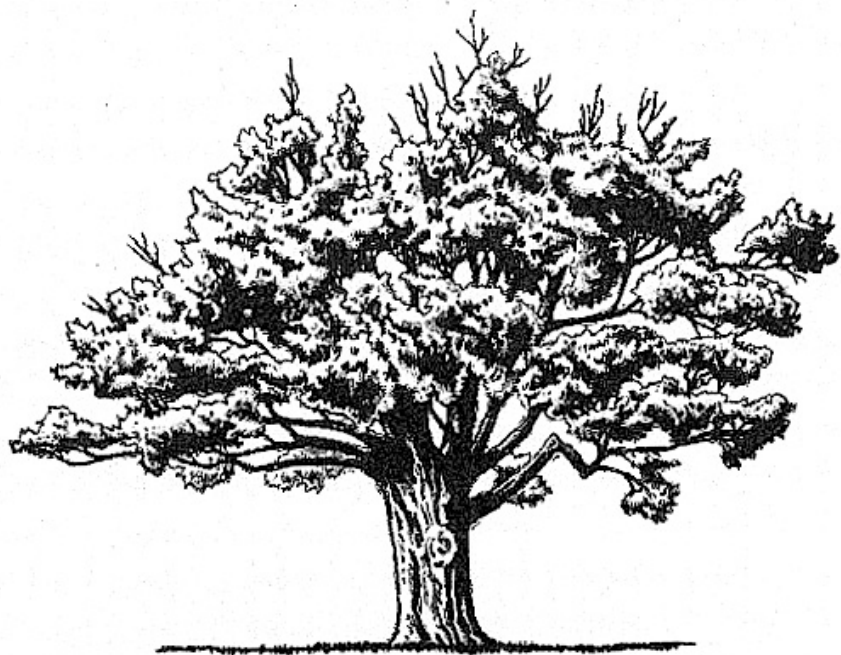
Photography: David Giacalone

Illustration: RKB Studios, Inc.

For more information on the Statewide Dialogue on Service and Volunteerism in California, please contact the project consultants:

Martha Diepenbrock—phone: 510-587-0972; fax: 510-587-0973; e-mail: [marthad@neteze.com](mailto:marthad@neteze.com), or  
Nancy Peterson—phone: 415-383-6370; fax: 415-383-6371; e-mail: [nancyp@slip.net](mailto:nancyp@slip.net).





*Sorbus domestica*

*The service tree, or Sorbus domestica, grows in Europe and Africa.*

*It is a tree of many uses. The ancient Celts made cider from the fruit of the tree;*

*Italians in the middle ages carved statues of saints from its wood.*

*There are many variations of the service tree, but they all grow slowly and root deeply into the soil.*

*A single tree may become as tall as 65 feet and live for more than 500 years.*